

17. REPORT OF THE LAND TRANSPORT SUBCOMMITTEE - BLENHEIM ROAD DEVIATION

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INTRODUCTION

At its meeting on 14 December 2000 the Council resolved to proceed with the Blenheim Road Deviation project and approved a budget to do so. The key resolutions were to:

- *Carry out further public consultation to augment the consultation already undertaken for the current year's annual plan, giving full details of the now fully developed proposal and increased capital expenditure, by 15 January 2001.*
- *Adopt and implement the road alignment and design recommended in the report, (subject to the successful outcome of the specified requirements), and subject to variation in the alignment of the southern portion to minimise or avoid the effect on The McLean Institute land.*
- *Consider the development of the relevant part of Deans Avenue for car parking for Hagley Park as a separate project at a later time.*

The purpose of this report is to:

- (i) Provide an update on progress towards implementation of these resolutions;
- (ii) Inform the Committee of the designation application prior to its lodgement; and
- (iii) Provide an update on financial planning for the project.

PROGRESS REPORT

Since the Council's resolution the following progress has been made:

1. The City Streets Unit has engaged City Solutions to be manage the project.

The aim of the project has been specified as:

"To construct a new roadway with a new railway over-bridge connecting the Blenheim Road/Mandeville Street Intersection with the Moorhouse Ave / Deans Avenue intersection thereby significantly improving traffic flows and safety in the area and providing a cost effective solution to replacing the existing substandard railway over-bridge on Blenheim Road."

The key objectives in the brief to City Solutions are specified as:

- *To provide a four lane carriageway link with appropriate intersection configurations at either end;*
 - *To construct a new rail over-bridge for this link, which provides clearances for future rail and road requirements.*
 - *To provide a safe and direct cycle and pedestrian link between Blenheim Road and Hagley Park;*
 - *To demolish the existing bridge and thereby provide an first grade pedestrian/cycle link in the existing Blenheim Road corridor;*
 - *To provide temporary access to Ngai Tahu southern site as required;*
 - *To collaborate with the developer of adjoining projects so that each parties requirements are met;*
 - *To achieve Council/electoral member "ownership" of the project by regular reporting and involvement;*
 - *To maximise the rent recovery from properties required for the project and recoveries from sale of surplus land thereby reducing the cost to the rate payers;*
 - *To manage risk by using best practice risk management procedures;*
 - *To use value management and engineering techniques to ensure the most cost effective design, materials and methods are used; and*
 - *To use the most appropriate contract type and implementation method for the delivery of the project to ensure budget, quality and time milestones are met.*
2. Legal agreements have been negotiated and signed for the purchase of all land necessary to achieve the Deviation. The Council is now legal owner of the 'South Railyards' site and the 'Ayrton (Togega) site.

3. Site investigations have been conducted to provide more certainty in planning the scheme. These include sub-soil testing and location of services.
4. The draft scheme has been developed, in consultation with affected land-owners. This has taken considerably more time than anticipated because of the complex design issues that have arisen.
5. The consent of Tranzrail has been obtained (in principle) to the designation requirement for the Deviation.
6. Expert advice has been engaged to support development of the project. This includes engagement of Tony Hearn QC as legal counsel together with consultants to advise as required on planning, traffic, landscape, noise, vibration and valuation matters.
7. Investigations have been pursued to support a designation application in respect of the Transitional and Proposed Plans. The Designations will, in effect, be akin to obtaining resource consent. The results of these investigations are summarised in the following section.
8. Further public consultation has been conducted as part of the build-up to lodgement of the Designations. This includes consultation on the budget, as reported to the February meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee and further consultation as discussed below.
9. The budget schedule has been refined to accord with the scheme proposed for Designation.

DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Legal advice is that the Council is required to obtain a designation to the Transitional District Plan and the Proposed City Plans to allow the project to proceed to construction. Given that the Council is the applicant, the application will be heard before an independent commissioner. In making the application, the Requiring Authority (Council) will show why the designation is needed, provide a physical and legal description of the required site, describe the nature of the proposed works, describe the effects on the environment and any proposed mitigation works, describe the alternatives considered and consultation undertaken with potentially-affected parties.

The draft Requirement will state that the designation is needed to provide for:

- *upgrading of the eastern end of Blenheim Road to safely cater for the needs of all road users (including cyclists and pedestrians).*
- *maintaining and upgrading of the eastern end of Blenheim Road to a high standard and to withstand a significant earthquake event.*
- *addressing the continuing problem of car parks for Hagley Park.*
- *encouraging redevelopment of the former saleyards site for residential purposes by limiting the adverse impacts of adjoining road traffic which is expected to increase in part because of the development of a major retail outlets on former railway land in the vicinity.*
- *providing safe and efficient access to the proposed retail development occurring on the Tower Junction and Southern Site (owned by Ngai Tahu).*

The deviation of Blenheim Road from its intersection with Picton Avenue through to the western end of Moorhouse Avenue enables all the above objectives to be met.

The extent to which the deviation and other options satisfy the above objectives is also detailed in the discussion of alternatives in 1(e) of the Notice of Requirement. This assessment will indicate that the proposed deviation achieves all of the objectives and achieves them efficiently and effectively.

Public consultation has been conducted via distribution of a publicity pamphlet to some 2000 businesses and residents in the area principally affected by the project. A series of open meetings were also conducted to allow people to obtain more detailed information via a series of panels and officers who were on-hand to answer questions from the public. The attached brochure summarises the information available on the panels. The result of this consultation exercise shows the vast majority of respondents viewed the project positively. There are however a series of concerns, principally from business owners in the Lowe Street area, that it is proposed to address where possible during the course of detailed design. It is proposed to continue to consult with these affected parties.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The approved budget for this project is \$9,945,000 + \$1,500,000 allowance for potential escalation as a result of adverse ground conditions, making \$11,445,000 net cost after recoveries through sale of surplus land.

A detailed schedule of the scheme proposed for designation has been prepared. The schedule suggests that, with the proposed savings outlined, the current estimate for the project varies between \$11,751,000 and \$13,130,000. It is considered that there is some potential for further savings on these estimates through the contract process and it is intended to keep the Land Transport Subcommittee informed as necessary with respect to progress on this, and other matters.

Subcommittee's

Recommendation: That the information be received.